



**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 12, 2012

VA Announces Recruitment Effort to Hire Mental Health Professionals

Sioux Falls, SD – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has developed an aggressive national mental health hiring initiative to improve recruitment and hiring, marketing, education and training programs, and retention efforts for mental health professionals.

To speed the national hiring process, VA developed the Mental Health Hiring Initiative, a multi-faceted, sustained national marketing and outreach campaign that includes targeted recruitment of mental health providers willing to take positions throughout the country, including in rural and highly rural markets, to serve all VA medical Centers and community clinics.

VA has an existing workforce of 20,590 mental health staff that includes nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers. Locally, 44 mental health clinicians and support staff work to support approximately 27,500 area Veterans.

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki noted that “as the tide of war recedes, we have the opportunity and the responsibility to anticipate the needs of returning Veterans.”

The team at the Sioux Falls VA is already actively treating Veterans through individualized care, readjustment counseling, and immediate crisis services. The

VA team has contributed to mental health excellence by providing quality and timely inpatient and outpatient mental health services for Veterans in eastern South Dakota, northwestern Iowa, and southwestern, MN. This includes support services for homeless Veterans and military installations, as well as Urban Indian Health and Indian Health Services. In addition to face-to-face care and counseling, staff use telehealth technology to provide services to five Community Based Outpatient Clinics in Aberdeen, Watertown, and Wagner, SD and Sioux City and Spirit Lake, Iowa.

The initiative will help VA meet existing and future demands for mental health care services in an integrated collaborative team environment and continue to position VA as an exemplary workplace for mental health care professionals.

“Mental health services must be closely aligned with Veterans’ needs and fully integrated with health care facility operations,” said VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. Robert Petzel. “Improving access to mental health services will help support the current and future Veterans who depend on VA for these vital services.”

To locate the nearest VA facility or Vet Center for enrollment and to get scheduled for care, Veterans can visit VA’s website at www.va.gov. Immediate help is available at www.VeteransCrisisLine.net or by calling the Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 (push 1) or texting 838255.

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